

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION  
OF H.R. 5121, LEGISLATIVE  
BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT,  
2003

SPEECH OF

**HON. DAVE CAMP**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 18, 2002*

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express my support for the fiscal year 2003 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. This is a responsible bill that will provide necessary resources for the Legislative Branch to carry out its duties in fiscal year 2003.

For the past several years, I have proposed an amendment to the Legislative Appropriations bill that requires all unspent office funds from Members' Representational Allowances be returned to the U.S. Treasury and used for debt reduction. This amendment has received bipartisan support every year and I am pleased the committee has included the proposal in the base bill.

I have been proud to work with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to reduce the national debt and incorporate fiscal responsibility into federal spending. We have reviewed programs and guidelines to make them more effective. Today, we again have the opportunity to reaffirm our promise of fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction to the American people by passing this legislation.

Although we are in a mild recession and a time of economic hardship we must maintain our commitment to pay off the national debt by pushing for more frugal spending. Without the unspent office funds provision, left over funds can be spent on other budget purposes. We must maintain our commitment to end wasteful spending and incorporate fiscal responsibility into this Legislative Branch Appropriations bill.

National security and winning the global campaign on terrorism are our top priorities, but if the government pursues pro-growth policies and maintains spending discipline, we can quickly return the budget to surplus. Now more than ever, every penny must be looked after and accounted for and it is important to reduce spending and cut government waste.

I would like to thank the Chairman LEWIS for his support and for including my unspent office funds provision in H.R. 5121 and I urge all members to support and pass this legislation.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE AND  
PROCUREMENT IMPROVEMENT  
ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

**HON. STEVE BUYER**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 22, 2002*

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, First, I want to thank our Full Committee Chairman Chris Smith and the Health Subcommittee Chairman JERRY MORAN for all their hard work on the bills before us today.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 3645, the "Veterans Health Care and Procurement Improvement Act of 2002," introduced by Representative LANE EVANS. H.R. 3645, as amended, would, among other things, provide

for improved management of the purchasing of medical and surgical supply equipment through the Federal Supply Schedule as prescribed by the VA Procurement Task Force. The bill ensures that current and future VA-DOD sharing initiatives would not be impacted by passage of this measure. The legislation also increases health care benefits to certain World War II Filipino veterans; authorizes dental care and services for all former POWs; and provides the authority to allow DOD to purchase medical supplies through VA's revolving supply fund; provides for the renaming of the VA community outpatient clinic in New London, Connecticut by designating it as the John J. McGuirk outpatient clinic.

There is one provision, in particular, that I would like to talk about. Section 7 of the bill provides for greater accountability for VA Research and Education Corporations. This provision is legislation I introduced, H.R. 5084, the "Department of Veterans Affairs Research Corporations Accountability Act of 2002," which was incorporated into H.R. 3645. I introduced H.R. 5084 because we need to insure that the strictest set of accounting measures are in place to make sure we know how funding to these corporations is being administered. It's important to point out that these corporations were established by Congress in 1988 to provide a flexible funding mechanism for approved research being performed at medical centers. Prior to giving VA this authority, any funding received from private sources, such as pharmaceutical companies, was placed in a General Post fund. However, it became virtually impossible to track the funding stream. There was no way to identify the source of the funding, nor how the money was being spent. The impetus behind establishing the research corporations was to create an accounting mechanism whereby the VA would submit to Congress an annual report on the number and location of corporations established and the amount of contributions made to each such corporation.

Earlier this year, the Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations and Health held a hearing on VA Research Corporations. We heard from the VA's Assistant Inspector General for Auditing that during the years 1994 through 1997, that his office published three reports which identified the need for stricter accountability and oversight with regard to the administration of funds by the Veterans Health Administration research corporations. For instance, in 1994, the IG audit of a million dollars of the \$3.6 million in expenditures spent at three research corporations and identified approximately \$625,000 that was spent on salaries of medical residents, staff travel not clearly related to research or administration. Funds were also spent for non-research related conferences, honorary gifts, awards, entertainment, other than non-research expenditures. This is just one example of how money can be misspent when in this case the corporation is not held accountable.

Under current law, the VA nonprofit research corporations are required to provide Congress with an annual report summarizing their activities and accomplishments. These reports have turned out to be nothing more than bare bones financial statements.

The VA Research Corporation Accountability Act amends section 7366 of Title 38 of the United States Code to require each VA corporation to submit a detailed statement that

includes the corporation's operations, activities, and accomplishments during the preceding year to the Secretary of the VA. The report should include the amount of funds received along with the source of funding; and an itemized accounting of all disbursements. Those corporations with funding in excess of \$300,000 must obtain an audit of the corporation for that year, corporations with funding totaling less than \$300,000 must obtain an audit every three years. These audits must be conducted by an independent auditor and shall be performed in accordance with generally accepted Government auditing standards.

The VA's Inspector General will be required to randomly review audits to determine whether or not they were carried out in accordance with the auditing standards outlined in the legislation. My bill would also extend the life of the corporations by providing authority to establish such corporations until December 31, 2006.

The VA has made tremendous contributions in the field of medical research. I think we all recognize the many accomplishments made by the VA in discovering new drug therapies and developing medical devices that have benefited not only veterans but all Americans. For instance, the VA invented the implantable cardiac pacemaker, developed the nicotine patch, performed the first successful liver transplant, and the development of the first oral vaccine for smallpox.

It is not my intention to prevent VA research from continuing to make great strides as it has in the past, but we must ensure that all research funds are directed with focus and accountability.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 3645, which was favorably reported by the full VA committee and has widespread support among our nation's veterans.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BOB RILEY**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 23, 2002*

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained for Rollcall No. 324, H. Con. Res. 439, Honoring Lindy Boggs and the Honoring Corinne "Lindy" Claiborne Boggs. Had I been present I would have voted yea.

I was also unavoidably detained for Roll Call No. 325, H. Res. 492, Expressing Gratitude for the World Trade Center Cleanup and Recovery Efforts at the Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island, New York. Had I been present I would have voted, "yea."

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS  
THAT CHINA SHOULD CEASE  
PERSECUTION OF FALUN GONG  
PRACTITIONERS

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 22, 2002*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to strongly support H. Con. Res. 188, Sense of Congress that the Government of